



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™

Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Puberty Blockers

Puberty blockers are another name for a group of medicines called gonadotropin-releasing hormone agonists, or GnRH agonists. These medicines prevent the body from making estrogen or testosterone. This will delay the physical changes of puberty. When taken as prescribed, puberty blockers can greatly improve mental health and quality of life for transgender and gender diverse youth.

Since puberty blockers pause unwanted puberty, it gives you more time to talk to a health care provider about your gender. Later, the blockers can also help make the physical changes to your affirmed gender easier. If you use puberty blockers you must work with your healthcare team to be sure you take these medicines safely. This will give you the most benefit with the least risk.

Puberty blocker medicines

- **Leuprolide acetate (Lupron Depot®)**
 - Leuprolide acetate is typically given as an injection into the muscle. It is given every 1 or 3 months in the clinic. The dosing of this medicine varies from person to person.
- **Histrelin acetate (Vantas®, Supprelin LA®)**
 - Histrelin acetate comes as a small, flexible rod. It is implanted under the skin of the inner upper arm by your provider. The arm implant lasts for at least 12 months, but it may be removed earlier, if desired.

Changes on puberty blockers

Puberty blockers stop your body from developing these sex traits that happen during puberty:

- biological females- breast growth and menstruation
- biological males- facial hair growth and deeper voice

Puberty blockers can take 1 to 2 months to start working. You may see more signs of puberty when you first start taking puberty blockers, but this will decrease as you keep taking the medicine.

The changes that happen when you take puberty blockers can be reversed. This means that if you stop taking the puberty blockers, puberty will start again as if you never took the medicine. It can take 6 to 12 months or more for puberty to start again after you stop the medicine.

Length of time on puberty blocks

The length of treatment time can vary based on your needs. However, you should not stay on puberty blockers, alone, long-term because sex hormones (estrogen and testosterone) are needed for your body to develop. Your provider will talk with you about how long you will be on puberty blocking therapy.

Fertility

While puberty blockers alone do not cause permanent infertility, this is a complex topic that you will discuss with your health care team.

Risks

Like all medicines, there are risks connected with puberty blocking therapy. These include:

- long-term risks that are not yet known
- people noticing you are not going through puberty (can cause unwanted attention or questions)
- not growing as fast or as tall as you would have without the medicine
- reduced bone mineral density

Your health care team will work with you to gather a personal and family medical history before you start treatment to decrease these risks.

Choosing puberty blocking therapy

Puberty blockers can affect each person differently. It is important to talk with your health care provider about the risks and benefits of these medicines. Puberty blockers are typically started in early puberty. If puberty blockers are started in the middle to late stages of puberty, they will not reverse changes that have already happened. However, they will prevent any future changes.

Insurance coverage for puberty blockers varies, but your health care team will work with you to find treatment options you can afford.